

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application 14584 of Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 (3108.1, DCMR 11), for a special exception for the proposed establishment of a campus plan and an addition to an existing museum library originally approved by BZA Order No. 568, dated July 16, 1941 (Paragraph 3101.46, 210, DCMR 11) at premises 1703 - 32nd Street, N.W., Square 2155, Lot 812).

HEARING DATE: April 22, 1987  
DECISION DATE: April 22, 1987 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The site known as premises 1703 32nd Street N.W. is bounded by S Street, 32nd Street and R Street to the south and west, and Lovers Lane to the east. The site is located in an R-1-B District.

2. The site comprises 707,709 square feet and is developed with extensive gardens and numerous structures including a mansion located at 32nd Street between S and R Streets. The mansion, known as Dumbarton Oaks, is now used to accommodate a research library and art collection. The structure is designated as a category II Landmark.

3. The R-1-B District extends to the south and west of the site. These areas are developed with apartment buildings, town houses and single family detached dwellings. Montrose park is located east of the site. The Washington Boys Club is located to the west of the site. The site is located within the boundaries of the Georgetown Historic District.

4. By BZA Order No. 568, dated July 16, 1941, the Board approved an application of the Trustees for Harvard University to establish an education use at the site with a condition that the applicant make no enlargements to existing buildings nor erect any new building except with the approval of the Board. Pursuant to this condition, the Trustees for Harvard University applied for and received approval for two enlargements of the buildings at Dumbarton Oaks. The first application, granted on June 1, 1956, allowed a new second floor to be added to the existing building for use as a library. The second application, granted by order dated March 20, 1961, allowed the erection of a one-story museum wing and a one-story basement library wing to the existing building at the 1703 32nd Street

address (now Lot 812 in Square 2155). On January 2, 1976 the Trustees also applied for permission to construct a underground library addition; however, that application, after lengthy hearings, was withdrawn, pursuant to the request of the Trustees made June 22, 1976.

5. Pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 (3108.1, DCMR 11) of the Zoning Regulation's the applicant is seeking a special exception under Paragraph 3101.46 (210, DCMR 11) for the proposed establishment of a campus plan and to allow the construction of an addition to the existing museum library.

6. The proposed construction will provide new museum space within an existing courtyard, as well as underground storage and support areas for the existing Byzantine collection. The new museum space will be devoted to exhibition of artifacts presently in the collection, while the new storage and support spaces will primarily be dedicated to allowing space for research access to the existing collection.

7. The proposed additional museum space will be surrounded by the existing building and the new storage and support areas will not be visible from the exterior.

8. The proposed addition is not likely to result in any increase in the number of fellows, visitors, faculty or staff utilizing the site.

9. If the proposed addition is constructed the total gross floor area of buildings on Lot 812 will be 64,081 square feet, an increase of 2,058 square feet over that existing. That floor area ratio of the lot will be 0.09, well below the 1.8 maximum floor area ratio prescribed for R-5-B Districts.

10. A master plan was submitted to the record indicating the location, height and area of all the various spaces contained in those buildings.

11. By memorandum dated April 15, 1987 the Office of Planning (OP) recommended that the application be approved. OP concluded that the proposed addition is not likely to alter the character of the area and that it will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding area. The Board concurs.

12. By memorandum dated April 15, 1987 the Department of Public Works (DPW) reported that it found there would be no adverse transportation or other impacts as a result of the expansion. The DPW further reported that it has no objections to the application. The Board concurs.

13. By letter dated April 14, 1987 Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E reported that it voted not to oppose the application as the applicant has met the burden of proof required under Section 8207.2.

14. All persons who wished to testify either in favor or in opposition to the application were given an opportunity to do so.

CONCLUSION OF LAW AND OPINION:


Based on the Findings of Fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception, the granting of which requires substantial evidence that the applicant has complied with the requirements of Paragraphs 3101.46 and Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations. The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof. The location and the operation are not likely to be objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic,, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions. The structures on the site do not exceed the allowable floor area ratio. An appropriate plan was submitted to the Board for developing the campus as a whole. The Office of Planning and Department of Public Work had no objections to the application. The Board further concludes that the proposed addition is consistent with the campus plan. The Board notes that the a substantial portion of the addition will be located underground and the remainder will be in what is now an interior courtyard. The Board further concludes that the special exception can be granted as being in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map and it will not affect adversely the use of neighboring property. The Board concludes that it has accorded to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E the "great weight" to which it is entitled. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is granted, subject to the following conditions.

1. The campus plan and new construction shall be in accordance with Exhibit No. 28 of the record.
2. There shall be no increased in the number of fellows, visitors, faculty, or staff as a result of the addition.

VOTE: 5-0 (William McIntosh, Lindsley Williams, Charles R. Norris, Paula L. Jewell and Carrie L. Thornhill to grant).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:

  
EDWARD L. CURRY  
Acting Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: JUN 12 1987

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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